

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ENV 2 (14) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

13 NOVEMBER 2014

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twentieth North South Ministerial Council Environment meeting was held in NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 13 November 2014. The meeting was attended by Alan Kelly T.D., Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mark H Durkan, MLA, Minister of the Environment and Danny Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development. Minister Kelly chaired the meeting.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

2. Ministers welcomed the presentation from Co-Operation Ireland in relation to their recent scoping study outlining the opportunities for greater North/South cooperation in the area of Waste Management.
3. Ministers also welcomed the publication of Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme – “Road to Zero Waste” on 30 September 2014 which focused on using materials more efficiently and not sending waste to landfill or other disposal. This will impact favourably on the economy, helping to promote and support ‘green jobs’, protect the environment and conserve resources.

4. The Council noted the proposed package of legislative measures being prepared by the Department Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in relation to household waste collection.
5. The Council noted the publication of Ireland's latest National Waste Prevention Programme, 'Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland'; the final report on the review of the 'Producer Responsibility Initiative' (PRI) system in Ireland and the 'National Hazardous Waste Management Plan' for Ireland.
6. Ministers noted the intention to make legislation in Northern Ireland, before the end of the year, to ban separately collected food waste being dumped in landfill and the regulations recently introduced by the Irish Government in relation to the traceability of waste to counter the trade in stolen metal.
7. The Ministers welcomed the ongoing work on the development of a new Used Tyre Scheme in Ireland which may inform the development of a complementary scheme in Northern Ireland.

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENTS OF WASTE

8. The Council noted that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has in place a programme of work for 2014-2015 which was agreed with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and Dublin City Council (DCC) and the first of these repatriation sites was commenced in August 2014 with completion expected by the end of November 2014.
9. Ministers also noted that Dublin City Council has established a Framework Agreement for the Disposal of Repatriated Waste, and has completed a public procurement process for the haulage of excavated waste to authorised facilities.
10. It was reported that resources continue to be targeted into joint enforcement action against illegal operators including carrying out co-ordinated inspections and exchanging intelligence and information on problem areas.
11. Ministers discussed the negative impact of fuel smuggling on the environment. They commended the action of agencies on both sides of the border with the recent finds of an illegal fuel plant in County Monaghan and of a large amount of toxic waste in south Armagh.

EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

12. Ministers noted the opportunities for cooperation on EU Funding that are ongoing including Horizon 2020, Life Programme and INTERREG V Transnational and Inter-Regional Programmes including that a joint €72m INTERREG VA bid is being pursued covering the terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments.
13. The Council noted that a Horizon 2020 workshop related to "*Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials*", will be held in

Derry/Londonderry on 20th November 2014 with a view to bringing together parties from both jurisdictions in order to encourage and support those who may decide to enter into a joint project.

14. Ministers welcomed the recent announcement confirming the success of the *REMEDiate* Horizon 2020 project bid worth €3.5m which will employ 14 researchers and its aims to establish a training network for specialists dealing with the remediation of contaminated land.
15. Ministers also welcomed that collaboration will continue to maximise drawdown of EU Funding and encouraged officials to seek new opportunities for potential projects which can attract EU funding.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

16. Ministers noted that the contract for the all-island air quality research study into the issue of airborne pollution from the combustion of residential solid fuels, in particular smoky coal was awarded in February 2014.
17. The Council noted that an interim report is being considered by officials and will be presented to Ministers in the near future.
18. Ministers noted that the study is due to commence its second and final phase before the end of the year and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2015, and a final report will be presented to a future NSMC Environment Meeting.

WATER QUALITY

19. The Council noted the continuing collaboration on the second-cycle River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD).
20. Ministers welcomed the publication in Northern Ireland of the synopsis of responses to the consultation on Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) reports and the publication in Ireland of the consultation document on the Timetable and Work Programme for the development of the Second Cycle RBMPs.
21. They welcomed the collaborative work on development of the River Trusts including the cross border River Blackwater Trust and the Erne River Trust and the revised WFD governance arrangements put in place in Ireland.
22. Ministers also welcomed the continued coordination on the Clean Coast and Coastcare Schemes and the continued cooperation regarding the development of Programmes of Measures for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING AND RESEARCH

23. Ministers noted that the contract for the all island research project into the Environmental Impacts of Unconventional Gas Exploration & Extraction (UGEE - fracking) has been awarded.

24. The Council noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held its 2014 National Information Day, entitled 'Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 5' on 2 October and that they published their research strategy for the period 2014-2020, with the evaluation of the first call for proposals currently underway.
25. The Council welcomed that NIEA and DECLG are exploring the possibility of a joint LIFE Programme workshop in 2015.
26. They also welcomed the continued collaboration between the EPA and the NIEA to identify emerging research needs and strategic planning of research funding programmes with European funding remaining a high priority for joint actions.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

27. It was agreed to hold the next Environment meeting in spring 2015.

**Joint Secretariat
13 November 2014**

Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org